

EPA proposes Missoula County mill site for Superfund designation

Smurfit-Stone Mill site proposed for National Priority List

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(Denver, Colo. – May 21, 2013) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today proposed adding the Smurfit-Stone Mill (Smurfit) site near Missoula, Mont., to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), making it eligible for additional study and cleanup resources under EPA's Superfund program. A 60-day public comment period about the proposed listing begins on Thursday, May 23rd.

The proposed Superfund site, located 11 miles northwest of Missoula, in Missoula County, covers approximately 3,200 acres. This former integrated pulp and paper mill is contaminated with dioxins, furans, arsenic and manganese associated with site's wastewater and sludge ponds. The site is adjacent to the Clark Fork River, a fishery that includes the federally designated threatened bull trout, as well as O'Keefe Creek.

"There are several known contaminants at the Smurfit site, and many areas are within the floodplain of the Clark Fork River," said Martin Hestmark, EPA's assistant regional administrator for Superfund programs in Denver. "Today's action will enable EPA to work with state, tribal, and local partners to define and implement cleanup actions that will remove contaminants and protect the river."

Various historic activities at the Smurfit-Stone mill, which opened in 1957 and closed in 2010, have contributed to known and suspected contamination at the site. Prior to 1969, untreated wastewater was directed to storage ponds. After a primary sedimentation treatment process was implemented in 1969, the produced sludge was disposed of in on-site ponds. These ponds, among others, were found to have dioxin, furan, arsenic, and manganese contamination present. Although shallow groundwater at the site appears to be contaminated, private residential and municipal drinking water wells are not believed to be affected at this time.

The Missoula County Commissioners and the Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have expressed support that the Smurfit site be placed on the NPL, and the State of Montana has concurred. The Clark Fork Coalition and Trout Unlimited have also expressed their support for NPL listing.

The Superfund program has provided important benefits for people and the environment since Congress established the program in 1980. Those benefits are both direct and indirect, and include reduction of threats to human health and ecological systems in the vicinity of Superfund sites, improvement of the economic conditions and quality of life in communities affected by hazardous waste sites, prevention of future releases of hazardous substances, and advances in science and technology.

Nationally, EPA is adding nine hazardous waste sites that pose risks to people's health and the environment to the NPL of Superfund sites. EPA is also proposing to add another nine sites to the list. Since 1983, EPA has listed 1,685 sites on the NPL.

For more information on the site please visit <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/smurfit-stone-mill>

To submit a question or comment during the 60 day review process please visit www.regulations.gov and follow the online instructions for submitting comments using FDMS Docket # EPA-HQ-SFUND-2013-0200.